

## Dealing with Morning Dawdling

Mornings can be a stressful time for families. One single mom told how she addressed this for her children, ages 9,10 and 11. "I didn't like what I was seeing in me. I heard myself nagging and prodding them along, yelling, "You're going to be late. You better hurry and brush your hair." "Get your shoes on." So she gathered the children together one evening to introduce a new plan.

"You three are getting older. Tomorrow begins a new system in which you're going to manage yourselves. I've been doing a lot of yelling in the morning and I don't want to do that anymore. So here's the plan. I'm not going to wake you up in the morning. Here is a new alarm clock for each of you. You can decide what time you want to get up and it will wake you.

"It's about here in the conversation that they're asking, 'What's the catch?' They knew something was coming.

"You're right, we're going to have check points each morning. At 7:15 am you need to be down for breakfast, all dressed with shoes on, and your bed made. By 7:50 am you need to have completed your chores and have combed your hair. Those are the checkpoints.

"To help you be motivated to meet these check points, I have something positive and something negative. Let's start with the positive. First, if you meet your two check points each morning for five mornings then I will allow you to watch a video on the weekend. However, if you miss one check point on a morning you will have to go to bed a half hour earlier that evening, since you must need more sleep in order to get up and get yourself ready." They ended the meeting positively as the mom taught the children how to set their alarms. They felt in control and eager to manage themselves the next morning.

The following day she was in bed and heard alarms going off and feet shuffling. She wasn't quite ready to get up and began having second thoughts about her great plan. In the end though, it worked. Her children were successful at getting ready and Mom didn't have to nag or be harsh. She replaced yelling and nagging with firmness and a clear plan with clear consequences, all in a positive atmosphere of cooperation.

This parenting tip is from the book, *Say Goodbye the Whining, Complaining, and Bad Attitudes in You and Your Kids*  
by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.